

THE IMPACTS OF OEF AND OIF ON PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE IMPACTS OF OEF AND OIF ON PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE
UNITED STATES ARMY**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The impacts associated with property accountability issues facing the United States Army is a growing concern. As the U.S. embarked upon supporting two conflicts simultaneously, the implementation of RESET and executing modularity over the last decade combined with other factors has contributed to the Army losing accountability for some of its equipment. This SRP will examine how we arrived at this state and some recommended proposals to rectify the situation. The intent will be to explore multiple levels within the Army's command structure and practices used to account for United States Government property. The effects of the various accountability efforts utilized for supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) campaigns will be examined. The primary intent is to provide leaders with the information to ensure that what is needed is provided when needed.

THE IMPACTS OF OEF AND OIF ON PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

The Army is fighting a determined enemy around the world. This new operating environment is characterized by high operational tempo and dynamically changing mission packages. Our agility is essential to react to the contemporary threat. Our supporting flexible equipping strategy translates into larger volumes of equipment changing hands quicker than in the past. While this equipping dynamic is positive for our war fighting capability it presents challenges to Soldiers charged with property accountability.

—2009 United States Army Posture Statement¹

Property accountability is the obligation imposed by regulatory law for maintaining accurate records, and outlining responsibility for all procured United States Government property with or without physical possession. This includes the requirement for maintaining a complete trail of all transactions, suitable for audit, and the ability to implement and adhere to associated internal controls.² Every Soldier from Enlisted to Officer is taught the importance of property accountability. This normally takes place early within their military education process. It typically begins with signing their first Hand Receipt, Department of the Army Form 2062 for an item of equipment or a weapon needed to begin their training. This process will be repeated several times over the course of an average 20 year career. This basic principal of accountability involves a holistic process of routine inventory through accounting, and establishing control measures for liability for the lifespan of the item of equipment acquired and issued. During the tenure of the equipment recipients career, this process is no less important from the first time it is done all the way to the last time. Property accountability is not an option.

The United States Army has severe property accountability challenges due to the high operations tempo (optempo) of equipment moves supporting the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Army equipment has transferred, and continues to move at such an accelerated pace, that it has exposed capability gaps within the Army's ability to provide accountability and consistent end-to-end asset visibility with complete confidence. The lack of a seamlessly integrated web based accountability system able to accurately depict retail and wholesale assets has been an absolute hindrance. One of the major figures in the property accountability process has been the Acquisition Corps. They have been solid contributors in supporting the fight. Their multitude of new equipment fieldings introduced many life saving and innovative items to Soldiers in an incredibly swift manner. This was one of the main purposes for the development of the REF (Rapid Equipping Force). The REF was highly beneficial in that it circumvented the regular established and lengthy Department of Defense (DoD) Acquisition Cycle. Unfortunately, many new equipment acquisitions were done early within the conflicts with such haste, that proper property accountability procedures were by-passed. Likewise, the movement of equipment designated for In Theater and Out of Theater Reset in support of the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process has not been executed without similar challenges. The periodic loss of asset visibility has generated millions of dollars worth of equipment being assessed against individuals having being found negligent in Financial Liability Investigations of Property Loss (FLIPL), formerly known as Reports of Survey. These reports were initiated against Soldiers and Civilians due to Army Regulations that mandated the reconciliation action within an amount of elapsed time with the loss of Army property. Often times, many of

the items listed within these reports were recovered completely intact at a later date.³

Another contributing factor to the challenges was the practice of loaning U.S.

Government property to contractors such as Kellog Brown and Root (KBR). The KBR

contractors routinely took possession of abandoned, and Found on Installation (FOI)

property, thereby leading to additional gaps in record keeping within Army unit property

books.⁴ These factors and others directly contribute to a problem that continues to

impact property accountability and equipment readiness within the Army. The Overseas

Contingency Operations of Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom provides background

as to how the accountability problems began to grow.

Overseas Contingency Operations are now approaching their tenth year and

have contributed to the Army's property accountability challenges with the repeated

deployment of units and the multiple transfers of Army equipment. This paper will

explore a decade of evolutionary effects on property accountability while supporting

these two campaigns. Additionally, the paper will identify factors that contributed to the

property accountability challenges, highlight on-going initiatives to mitigate the

challenges and recommend potential solutions. One of the biggest causes for the

property accountability challenges originated with decisions that were made to place US

Army combat assets into the Theater as quickly as possible.

In its infancy leading into the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the focus for

Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) became combat operations in

Afghanistan and Iraq. Operations in support of GWOT became the strategic priority for

the Army and that migrated to the lowest levels. The routine Tactics Techniques and

Procedures (TTPs) associated with supply accountability were relaxed by HQDA for a

streamlined process that afforded Army Commanders the benefit of speed in the build-up of combat forces. Additionally, ground commanders began to complain to Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) about the difficulty of maintaining two separate property books and accounting for items spread across the Theater in Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).⁵ During this period, it was mandated that deploying units maintain a record of their unit owned equipment left at home station, as well as unit owned and borrowed equipment that was to be utilized in support of the unit for its Theater mission. In order to set conditions in a manner to maximize a quick massing of combat forces, a significant change to normal procedures would have to be implemented.

During the initial stages of OIF (May 03), the Army initiated “Wartime Accountability” rules which essentially relaxed normal peacetime accountability controls.⁶ This was a significant change from the normal property accountability procedures. This rule began to set a tone to infer that property accountability may not be as important as some other facets in the future success of the Army’s interests. The intent of implementing Wartime Accountability was to unburden field commanders and to allow them to focus on their wartime mission.⁷ The policy prescribed using unit property accounting requirements in a time of war or emergency. Authorization document requirements of paragraph 2-4 (Army Regulation 710-2) remain in effect except that the parent unit commanders may authorize discretionary allowances.⁸ The Wartime Accountability directive relieved Army units from basic property accountability procedures such as documenting the receipt of new and existing equipment, recording equipment transfers, and reconciling all property transactions and discrepancies. The

Army executed Wartime Accountability procedures for 18 months within the Theater. This time of incurred risk, has generated mixed results. From the tactical perspective it was a huge success and met the initial objectives of quickly massing a superior combat force to engage the enemy. The logistics community viewed the action as chaotic, with effects that would be long standing. It is now very evident that it will take several years to rectify the effects. The impact of having to account for constantly moving equipment throughout Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Djibouti and Horn of Africa will be extremely arduous and time consuming. These were the initial areas assigned to the Theater Property Book Officer. The Theater Property Book Officer (TPBO) was assigned to the 2nd Battalion of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade (AFSB), in Balad, Iraq. The intent was to keep the Theater PBO centrally located within the battle-space in order to provide immediate support to the warfighter. In 2009, the 401st AFSB in Afghanistan assumed control of the property book for their region.⁹

Early within the conflict, some Modified Table of Organization & Equipment (MTOE) and Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) property were designated to remain in Theater by order of HQDA G3. This directive also applied to some specialty items purchased specifically for units engaged in OEF and OIF. The equipment designated to remain in theater was the beginning of Stay Behind Equipment (SBE) and later, Theater Provided Equipment (TPE).¹⁰ The Army established TPE to negate transporting cost, movement times and to free strategic air lift assets. TPE was forward positioned to offset deployment requirements, fill shortages, fill DA approved Operation Needs Statements (ONS) or to fill US Army Central Command (ARCENT) validated Operational requirements. As a result of establishing TPE, units returned to home

station as their equipment was transferred into pools of TPE within the Theater.¹¹ This was the most common form of TPE but there were two other sources of equipment used as TPE in Theater: Short Term Transfer Equipment (Originally Stay Behind Equipment) and Long Term Equipment Transfer. The latter referred to equipment that was transferred to a unit by order of a HQDA G3 directive for a period exceeding 90 days, but not to exceed one rotation.¹² Lastly, a Short Term Equipment Transfer was a transfer of equipment by HQDA G3 to a designated unit for a period of 90 days or less.¹³ However, these equipment transactions were not transferred to the TPE Property Book. The equipment was merely accounted for by a hand receipt. The supply transaction relieving the units of the items was accomplished and posted to the applicable units' property books. In most cases, this was the only supply record to document, manage and validate these types of transactions. These three TPE sources and equipment transfer transactions were absolutely critical to the success of the efforts to support OEF and OIF because of their direct linkage to equipment readiness. Further, these transactions impacted equipment, availability, and sustainment for units executing combat operations. The TPE included specialty items such as Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units (ROWPUs), Up-Armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (UAHs) and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. The TPE pool had grown to exceed over 173,000 major end items with a value in excess of \$16.5 billion.¹⁴ These assets which belonged to Army units were designated by Department of the Army to be retained for their necessity and importance in supporting mission requirements. It was absolutely critical that the Combatant Commander was provided valid information on systems availability and readiness, which had direct impact on the

planning, execution and success of operations. The availability of assets also assisted in the Army's transformation to modularity, which was also drastically changing the Army while engaged in two conflicts.

A contributing factor to Army property accountability challenges occurred as units began to deploy to the theater for OEF and OIF. The Army began a major transformation effort from division centric units to modular brigades. As the complexity associated with fighting a nontraditional joint and coalition based conflict became apparent, the Army needed to implement change. There could not be efficiencies gained by service autonomy. The future conflicts would require a flexible, lean and responsive force capable of swift execution. The Army's transformation was to focus on an interchangeable force that could easily adapt to light, heavy, or Stryker Brigade Combat Team (BCT) configurations on the battlefield. The division format was replaced by the BCT task organization. The object of the BCT structure is to allow commanders the flexibility to build BCT sets tailored to meet the needs of the mission and to provide a quicker, leaner and more adaptive force. The Division Support Command (DISCOM) was phased out as a part of the implementation of Modularity. The DISCOM was the legacy Army's conduit to all division materiel management matters concerning the management of the division's property book, ammunition, centralized maintenance, and general supply. Additionally, the DISCOM was responsible for the division's automated supply management, Class II, III, IV, IX supply management and the operation of the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS). The disbanding of the DISCOM, which was considered a critical node for information and guidance, has been shifted to other elements within the command hierarchy with inconsistent results. To fully grasp the

enormity and impact of the DISCOM's contribution, it is important to understand the complexity of its structure.

Within the DISCOM's structure, the Division Property Book Officer's (DPBO) team was composed of the property book teams from each of the brigades and major subordinate commands (MSCs) within the division. The DPBO team also contained an asset visibility section. Within the modularity composition, this team still exists but it has been decentralized into one property book team for each of the brigades of the modular force. The intent was to increase the combat capacity within the brigades. The asset visibility sections have been relocated to the division and corps G4 sections.¹⁵ The reality is that often times the required skill set of the brigade property book teams were not developed enough to handle the responsibilities of managing seven to eight companies' worth of equipment that are normally assigned to one battalion within a BCT. Most BCTs have a minimum of five to six battalions. The property book team can be responsible for 35 companies worth of equipment. In the DISCOM construct, the property book officer was a senior warrant officer. In the BCT, the property book officers are junior warrant officers. Furthermore, the Army has extreme difficulty preserving the associated Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) grade and rank and experience requirements to staff the BCT property book office. Operational rotation requirements complicated matters due to an unusually high optempo over the last decade.

The final element within the DPBO structure is the Automated Supply Management section. It was relocated under modularity to multiple locations. This capability now exists with the Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) within two locations, the

Supply Support Activity (SSA) and the Support Operations (SPO). The capability to monitor and manage the geographic routing identifier code (RIC GEO) to include the management review file (MRF) was split between the sustainment brigade and the sustainment command.¹⁶

For all of its dramatic change, the disbanding of the DISCOM has been met with mixed reviews from the tactical level where it has its greatest effect. Although, most agree that the initial concept was very positive in theory and intent, the product has not been integrated without major challenges. The effects of not having the right mixture and quantity of personnel to execute the vast and complex mission of the DISCOM, in addition to a decrement in speed and in some cases expertise, has soured some opinions on the transition. This added to the challenges of maintaining seamless property accountability as a result of this change. The Army's transformation to modularity was a major deviation for the force. It was a significant departure from the procedures of the Cold War era. Just as the Army transitioned its focus into planning and fighting new enemies, in new regions, it also migrated to a different force management process in adopting ARFORGEN and its synchronized, never ending cycle of events.

ARFORGEN is an Army initiative to implement a deliberate structured progression of combat power on cyclic basis. The value it provides to Commanders is improved visibility and predictability as to when a major unit will deploy and which unit it will replace. This proved to be more efficient and effective than JOPES (Joint Operations Planning and Execution). JOPES, prior to ARFORGEN, was the primary

system used by Department of Defense for translating National Security policy decisions into OPLAN and OPORDS.

ARFORGEN's overarching purpose is to provide combatant commanders and civil authorities with a steady supply of trained and ready units that are tasked organized in modular expeditionary force packages and tailored to joint mission requirements. These operational requirements focus the prioritization and synchronization of institutional functions to recruit, organize, man, equip, train, sustain, mobilize, and deploy units on a cyclic basis. ARFORGEN's adaptability addresses both emerging and enduring requirements. Simultaneously, Army institutional adaptations to ARFORGEN maximize potential efficiencies while ensuring effective capabilities are built to support operational requirements.¹⁷

The Army established ARFORGEN as a rotational process, designed to effectively and efficiently generate trained and ready Army forces for combatant commanders at sustainable levels. Through ARFORGEN, the Army facilitates and manages the structural progression of increased unit readiness over time, providing recurring periods of available trained, ready, and cohesive units for contingency missions. ARFORGEN synchronizes unit capabilities and readiness reporting with equipping and resourcing strategies. The process establishes priorities based upon a units' rotational sequences, facilitates equipment cross-leveling, and provides predictability for commanders. The process places units in one of three categories based upon their readiness status: Reset/Train, Ready, and Available. The intense schedule of ARFORGEN's cycle made it crucial to get the right equipment entered into Reset, processed, and returned as needed. All of these factors contributed to a greater reliance on positive property accountability measures. Given the constant flow of multiple Army units into the cycle, success is achieved by always having units and their equipment ready to deploy as needed. The enemy is also training and adaptive to our TTPs. Given the advent of evolving technology and the rapidly changing dynamics of

the combat environment, training at times does not present enough leverage to avert an even fight. The introduction of new equipment and systems helps to keep the Army with the advantage.

The Acquisition community, led in theater by Program Executive Officers (PEOs) and Program Managers (PMs), worked at an expeditious pace in order to provide the best technologically advanced and combat superior products available to the troops in theater. Their focus was to get possible life saving equipment to the front lines as quickly as possible. This encompassed over 50 new equipment fielding transactions in theater. The total amount of the new equipment exceeded \$200 billion dollars.¹⁸ While much progress has been made with the use of information technology to facilitate rapid distribution, the material fielding process continues to be burdened with an in-transit document closure weakness and an ineffective end-to-end audit trail. These shortcomings have led to accountability losses for over 1.45 billion dollars worth of major items.¹⁹ This initially caused two problems. First, in order to get the items fielded quickly, there were instances where a PM would by-pass normal supply accountability procedures and provide equipment to units that were not on a property of record account. This created situations where distributed items would not gain proper recognition with a responsible party in the system of record, resulting in a loss of property accountability. The second common problem experienced in theater with new equipment fielding was the introduction of non-standard equipment. This term was typically used to categorize commercial off the shelf (COTS) and items being newly introduced and fielded. Non-standard equipment is classified in two categories, tactical non-standard equipment and non-tactical standard equipment.

Tactical non-standard equipment is equipment obtained for mission support or force protection. It is obtained by request through an operational needs statement, joint urgent operational needs statement, or by other providers such as the rapid equipping force (REF), Army Asymmetrical Warfare Office, Intelligence and Security Command, and /or Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) G-2. The equipment is normally funded by supplemental appropriations.²⁰ The second type of non-standard equipment is Non-tactical equipment. These items are commercial items purchased by units utilizing Government Purchase Cards (GPC). The equipment is generally used to assist base operations functions, and garrison support services. It is not the norm for non-tactical equipment to be considered for acquisition program candidacy.²¹

The uniqueness of non-standard equipment items further exacerbated the problems with property accountability as most of these items needed to be placed into a data base that would provide an Army generated identifiable code aligned to their description. The Army uses the Standard Study Number-Line Number Automated Management and Integrating System (SLAMIS) to introduce non-standard equipment into the Army supply system. This logistical system greatly enhanced and assisted efforts to realign property accountability and will be fully defined later in this paper.

OEF and OIF introduced the problem of loss of asset visibility within the supply management system from unit level as it transitioned to the depot for reset. As a result of this, Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced (PBUSE) was introduced into the theater to fix this at the division level. It is the Army's first web-based logistics property accountability system. This did not happen without complications as Property Book Officers struggled between using manual and automated systems for the purpose of

equipment accountability. Many remote areas had difficulty supporting the required bandwidth to utilize the automated systems. Early in the conflict most signal units did not have the capacity to support the use of STAMIS (Standard Army Management Information Systems).²² STAMIS is an Army unique, consolidated automated material management system. It combines the use of several software based systems to manage logistics and maintenance support. PBUSE is one of the subordinate systems within the STAMIS compilation. PBUSE provides a responsive and efficient means to maintain accountability records for the Army's property and its 14,855 Modified Table of Organization & Equipment (MTOE) and Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) units within the Active Army, Army Reserve and National Guard.²³ PBUSE worked well at the Brigade down to subordinate unit level (retail/user level) in providing visibility and accountability for standardized equipment. Specifically the PBUSE system maintains accountable records for the Army's inventory of property in the hands of MTOE, TDA, and Installation units.²⁴ However, PBUSE did have its limitations. The system was not designed to provide Total Asset Visibility (TAV) of equipment from the retail to wholesale levels, nor was it capable of doing so. As a result of this shortfall, equipment transferred from the retail systems (user level) and transitioning into the wholesale system (depot level), did so without a seamless method of accountability. This made it very difficult to track equipment transitioning within the two levels. The retail level accounting for end items is done by a serial numbered process. The wholesale level accounted for end items by nomenclature. The Standard Depot System (SDS) is used to account for equipment at the wholesale level. SDS is an interface tool used to extract data from PBUSE and is primarily used by representatives of the Army War Reserve

Deployment System.²⁵ As long as the wholesale accountability has an item within its system, SDS will be able to depict it as the correct number of end items, and the system would reflect an equal balance without validation of a serial number. The SDS accounts for equipment by Line Item Number (LIN) and quantity. This shortfall exposed lack of continuity within the system between the retail and wholesale systems. The accountability system used to view items transitioned into the wholesale system was Army War Reserve Deployment System referred to as AWRDS.

Army equipment inducted into the depot level for reset is categorized as war reserve stock. AWRDS is an automated information system that affords logistics accountability managers the capability to build, maintain, and view databases containing Army War Reserve stocks and equipment. AWRDS supports the daily activities of Army Pre-positioned Stocks (APS) depots and forward deployed maintenance to track equipment at the wholesale level, thus improving asset visibility. AWRDS is able to retrieve data and provide complete visibility in real time, for multi-pack, and containers. Additionally, AWRDS is capable of producing reports, data sets, and listings. This capability has become invaluable in assisting asset managers' view of what was previously accomplished with great difficulty. This information reflects how the U.S. Army War Reserve Stocks are configured to support rapid military deployments.²⁶ AWRDS provides the logistical planners for the combatant commander a greater range of reliability in planning. To provide an identifiable code for a nonstandard equipment item in order to be placed into the accountability database, it was required to utilize the Standard Study Number-Line Number Automated Management and Integrating System (SLAMIS).

SLAMIS was implemented 26 July 2005. HQDA Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, led the initiative to develop this system, establishing infrastructure for nonstandard items that would provide the same level of visibility, accountability, and management support available for standard items.²⁷ SLAMIS provided the capability to the Nonstandard Line Item Number (NSLIN) process for all Army units for both Active and Reserve Component.

As the Oversea Contingency Operations and the concurrent transformation to a modular Army continues, commanders have become increasingly dependent on commercial off the shelf and Government off-the-shelf equipment and nondevelopmental items to fill mission requirements. Multiple PBOs in an attempt to account for these nonstandard items, resulted in the assignment of many different nonstandard line item numbers to the same item. It was impossible to gather a single Army-wide identification of specific items because the army did not have systems in place to provide universal NSLIN management information needed at the HQDA and Army Materiel Command (AMC) levels. Items such as add-on armor kits, Warlock force protection systems, and John Deere M-Gators are prominent examples of these items that caused frustration and continued to support the need for the Army to centrally manage NSLINs and associated management control numbers (MCNs) for nonstandard items.²⁸

The advent of SLAMIS greatly assisted in providing order to the Army's accountability of nonstandard equipment, which did not exist in the early stages of the GWOT. As of 22 February 2006, more than 15,000 NSLIN requests have been successfully submitted and the central NSLIN Master Catalog contained 22,000 NSLIN

records.²⁹ Most of these actions were initiated and supported by Army Materiel Command (AMC) elements.

In 2002, the Army Field Support Brigades (AFSBs), a subsidiary of AMC, emerged on the battlefields of Southwest Asia to support efforts in the GWOT. AFSBs are relatively new Army logistics organizations, officially established in 2006 as a reflag from the Combat Equipment Battalion (CEB) and Combat Equipment Groups (CEG), and Logistics Support Element (LSE). The AFSBs serves as the U.S. Army Materiel Command's (AMC) primary interface with Army forces and serve as the bridge between the generating and operating forces. AFSBs are structured according to a mix of Modified Table of Equipment and Table of Distribution Allowances and are designed to deploy in support of brigade and higher level maneuver units. AFSBs mission is to provide AMC national –level sustainment support and serve as key synchronizers of acquisition, logistics, and technology (ALT) support to the Army units worldwide. They provide specialized, modular, and deployable support from both operational and tactical echelons of command across the entire spectrum of military operations.³⁰

Organized as subordinate commands under Army Sustainment Command (ASC), AFSBs rely heavily on contractors to execute the missions specified in the Army Field Support Brigade's interim Field Manual 4-91, January 29, 2010. Mission accomplishment requires close coordination among AFSB commanders and their staffs with ASC, Program Managers, Program Executive Officers, Life Cycle Management Centers and contracting officers. Mission accomplishment also requires detailed tracking and prioritization of all related mission components such as new equipment fielding and the movement of equipment through the Army's reset process.

Since their establishment, AFSBs have successfully sustained unit deployments in support of OEF and OIF by providing on-time national and operational level supplies, services, and equipment. They have also supported the Army's transformation process from a division-centric force to a modular force. AFSBs support to the transformation process has required them to execute missions and tasks that they were not fully established or resourced to perform. One example is Army Pre-positioned Stocks Battalions morphed into theater enabler battalions, thus the CEBs transformation to AFSBs. Additionally, AFSBs have been executing key responsibilities and tasks within the Army's Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process. The execution of these responsibilities has allowed the Army to deploy and redeploy units faster and more efficiently in the current fast-paced demanding environment.

The mission of these units has evolved over the years to better support the warfighter. One major contribution of the AFSB is assuming responsibility of the Theater Property Book containing \$16.4 billion dollars worth of assets.³¹ These items were geographically dispersed throughout the battlespace with units in support of the war. To assist in the management of these assets, the AFSB maintained TPE Assistance Teams that were also geographically aligned with customer units to alleviate the risk of long and high risk vehicular movement along Improvised Explosive Device (IED) laden roadways in order to conduct transactions. Finally, to assist units in the receipt and turn in of TPE and unit equipment, the AFSB provided Redistributed Property Assistance Team (RPAT) yards and Mobile Reset and RPAT teams. These AFSB assets, assisted redeploying units in the formulation of their Reset induction plans and the execution of the actual transfer of equipment on their site. All of these efforts

were executed by the AFSBs to assist the warfighter in support and transition. One of the most difficult aspects of the unit's transition was the accountability and transfer of property.

After the major combat elements and their support elements entrenched into the theater, the Wartime Accountability policy was rescinded in 2004. The Army began implementation of "Operation Total Recall".³² This effort was led by HQDA G-4 to address discovered shortcomings within the theater's supply chain of equipment moving internally and externally. The Army was pleased with the gains from exercising such an unorthodox maneuver to quickly amass its combat assets. It came with an extensive price. The Army recognized that the time had come, to reconcile the force, and attempt to gain complete asset visibility of the Army's inventory from unit level through depot. This was a multi-faceted problem with many components that compounded matters such as container management.

A major egregious problem effecting property accountability rested largely on container management. A U.S. Army Audit Agency (USAAA) report cited that visibility over shipping containers was systematically problematic in Southwest Asia and found three overarching factors the Army should have addressed to improve visibility over containers, including: the continued use of containers beyond their intended use (storage being the primary example); categorizing and treatment of containers as expendable assets; and the absence of sufficient container management education and training at logistics schools.³³ This is one example of how a simple, yet highly coveted item in the Theater is directly impacted by the problems associated with property accountability in Theater. The movement of trailers and their contents has also

presented challenges adding to accountability challenges. All of these assets that were not flown or moved by sea, were moved by ground convoy.

Convoy operations have greatly contributed to the loss of property accountability in Theater. Most of the convoys moving equipment in and out of Iraq were done so with contracted civilian assets mostly without military escort. Military Police assets have always been at a premium in the conflict. This simply made it impossible to support every convoy operating between Iraq and Kuwait. Most of these convoys were conducted with minimal if any official U.S. Government oversight. It was not uncommon for convoys to defer from established routes and offload at non-approved nor scheduled stops. Sometimes several weeks or more could elapse before the trailers and their contents could be rescheduled into another convoy for their final destination. While the transportation fleet was quite robust in Iraq, the demand was constant and always greater than the available assets. As a result, the possibility always existed that unscheduled, stagnant trailers and their contents would become prime candidates for extensive delays, pilfering, theft and at times cannibalization. In most cases with the absence of government oversight, it was impossible to establish an audit trail and obtain the details to determine what happened to the property. Some losses were not due to circumstance but were actually caused by direct intentions.

There has been a category for persistent cause of loss that has been deliberate and strictly self-induced. The presence of theft, pilfering, and scavenging has made a impacted negatively in the Army's attempt to actively control property accountability. Several individuals deployed into the Theater have been empowered to properly maintain accountability of Army assets and have used their position for personal gain

and at times monetary profit. There have been multiple cases of theft by service members, civilians and contractors supporting the war, since the movement of units and equipment into the Theater. Three examples of these types of crimes are included below:

1-Defense contractor Haliburton's lost accountability of more than \$18 million worth of equipment. Investigators could not account for 52 of 164 items in a random inventory. Haliburton's inventory includes over 20,000 items of equipment. Items determined missing in the random inventory included two generators, worth nearly \$1million, 18 trucks or sport utility vehicles and six laptop computers.³⁴

2-In 2005 The U.S. Criminal Investigation Command in Iraq, issued a reward of \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the responsible party, for the theft of 19 each AN/PVS-4, Night Vision Monocular Devices. The property was stolen in transit between the Defense Distribution Dept, New Cumberland and the Supply Support Activity (SSA) Yard, Camp Rustimayh, Iraq.³⁵

3-In January 2010, an Army captain pleaded guilty to stealing military equipment from a base in Balad, Iraq and selling the items to a local Iraqi businessman for sums ranging from \$400,000 to \$1 million. The items included a bus, eight trucks, five trailers, and 19 generators and various unknown items.³⁶

These are a few of the numerous illegal activities that have directly impacted property accountability and unit readiness. The actions of these individuals serve as a reminder for the need of tighter controls and oversight in the accountability process. Even with the precautionary measures, it is understood that there will always exist a determined criminal element waiting to exploit any given opportunity. Commanders and

leaders at every level must set conditions to eradicate these actions and to ensure that everyone is mandated to practice proper property accountability procedures.

In order to generate an environment to promote commander and leader involvement at strategic, operational and tactical levels, it is imperative for the Army to begin at the highest level. The Army has taken a huge step forward by projecting a strategic message from the Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN William Casey dated 12 June 06. In the message, the Chief announces, "Formal property accountability procedures as prescribed in AR 735-5, Chapter 2, are in effect. Wartime policy remains rescinded. All deviations, giving temporary authority to use different procedures, must be requested and approved by the Army G4."³⁷ This statement served as the highest guidance to the field on the seriousness of the getting the property accountability problems resolved.

Additionally the Chief charged the Deputy Chief of Staff G4, LTG Mitchell Stevenson to take the issue of property accountability as one of his top priorities. In turn the G4 began a Campaign on Property Accountability for the Army. The G4 developed a Property Accountability Task Force whose mission is to identify capability gaps within the property accountability system and to work towards developing and implementing solutions.³⁸ This is an ongoing process and is being accomplished by use of information sharing in conjunction with all the Logistics Management Centers (LMC), and stakeholders within the property accountability management process.

A pivotal stakeholder agency in this recovery process has been the Logistic Support Activity (LOGSA). The role of LOGSA has been invaluable as they have been the catalyst in synchronizing an automated, web based system with the capacity to

afford TAV of equipment from Soldier to the depot and back to the Soldier. They have aggressively worked to improve the accuracy and compatibility of the multiple data sources that comprise the Logistics Information Warehouse (LIW).

My recommendations are completely aligned with the actions that the CSA and the G4 have established. The Chief has set the guidance and the G4 is implementing the intent with the assistance of the leadership of the Army. Combined with all the elements associated with the property accountability process they are working towards a goal that will reestablish and enforce CSDP and property accountability.

Additionally, it is absolutely imperative that a web based, real time, and seamless asset visibility system is developed to track equipment moving within the wholesale and retail systems. SDS and AWRS are good interim solutions but a real-time, user friendly system with accessibility at lower levels would be monumental in alleviating the property accountability challenges. This would greatly decrease the volume of FLIPLs and improve accuracy in reporting.

In closing, the strategic, operational, and tactical heroics of the U.S. Army during the OEF and OIF era will be applauded, lauded, examined, analyzed and criticized by some depending on their agendas and intentions. Regardless of position, the accomplishments cannot be denied. The U.S. Army once again regained its dominant status as the preeminent military force in the world, by decisively engaging in two conflicts simultaneously without decrement in capability. This did not come without sacrifice or loss within the establishment. The men and women who valiantly fought to persevere and spread freedom did so knowing that they were afforded the best training and equipment to accomplish their objectives. It is the obligation of the nation to ensure

that standards are enforced so that the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines never have doubts on their training and equipment. It is the obligation of all leaders within the logistics system to ensure that what is needed is provided when needed.

Endnotes

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